

I am opposed to Verizon Wireless' proposal to delay implementation of the FCC's rule requiring portability of cellular telephone numbers. While it appears obvious beyond dispute that portability is in the consumers' interest, and denying portability is in Verizon's interest, those that argue against portability are either not genuinely interested in promoting competition, or have been living in a cave in Afghanistan for the last five years. I have established my identity with clients through my cell phone number, it seems ridiculous to expect me to forfeit the recognition generated with my current number, just to change cell phone companies. It seems to me that an honest answer to one single question will resolve this dispute, "How many people would have changed phone companies after the break-up of AT&T if they had to change telephone numbers to do it?" The answer: Not many! A corollary to that question is, how many would switch now if they had to change telephone numbers everytime a long distance carrier offered preferred rate? Again, not many. An example of why portability is necessary is the way the cable television market has evolved. While consumers ostensibly have a choice, I know of no one, and no where, where more than a single service provider is available, consumers, therefore, have no choice, and cable television companies, while regulated on paper, are essentially free to exercise their monopolistic powers. Some may argue that cellular telephone users have a choice, but the price of changing prohibits effective use of that choice. Moreover, the longer a cellular telephone company can keep an individual, the higher the price of change becomes. By delaying implementation of the portability rules, Verizon's hold over its customers becomes stronger and stronger. What monopoly WOULDN'T to keep that type of system in place and functioning. You might also want to consider whether we would even HAVE cell phones if AT&T were still in charge. Letting consumers vote with their feet has generated tremendous improvements in the service, price and variety of telephones available. Letting consumers vote with their feet without having to give up part of their identity could generate similar benefits. After all, the cell phone companies do not own the telephone numbers, at least I they don't yet, why should a number be discarded merely because someone wants to find a better or cheaper service.

Thank you for your time.
James M. Kron
Cingular Customer